HARAMBEE FLAME

VOL. 8 NO. 10

October 1987

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Run, Jesse, Run?

Here we are again, in the political season. And now, as in the last presidential campaign, we African folks are being asked to choose between "realism" and "symbolism," between the Jesse Jackson "who can't win" and some Caucasian who would hopefully show his appreciation for our support by tossing out to us some form or fashion of political crumb. On the one hand, there are those who say that we should be realistic and recognize that America is not ready to accept an African as President. On the other hand, there are those who tell us that our support for Jesse Jackson, up to the point of the Democratic primary, serves the symbolic function of having our own candidate for a time and being able to feel good about that. And, of course, there are several variations on these worn-out themes. But much of the advice we're getting and many points of the debate are well off any significant mark. Two questions that are of importance but have received little attention are 1-Is there something more than symbolism attached to an African candidacy? and 2-If the idea of an African running for the presidency is a good idea, is Jesse Jackson a proper banner-carrier?

As to the first question, it is assumed that since an African cannot be elected to the oval office in 1988, his running is only symbolic. This assumption contains another: that we can only derive practical benefit by the candidate we support - African or not - actually winning. This is tantamount to telling an army that it has but two choices, to either conquer or be defeated. The fact is that it is not necessary for a candidate of ours to win in order for us to derive practical benefit. If we recognize that, in order for us to benefit from the establishment political process, it is required that one of the political parties has to develop a platform of radical economic and political change, then it should be clear to us that we cannot look to either the Democratic or Republican Party as <u>our</u> Party. We need only to review these past several years of "Reaganism" and recall that the policies and practices which so many of our "leaders" criticized were only passed and implemented through the

cooperation of a Congress controlled by Democrats to see that there is no significant difference between the two parties.

What, then, are we supposed to do in order to try and secure what we need through the political process, particularly since we are but 10-12% of the U.S. population? While our establishment brethren, such as Ben Hooks and Vernon Jordan, tell us that we have an obligation to vote because of foreparents of ours suffering and dying to secure our right to vote, they do not tell us - and maybe it doesn't even occur to them - that the right to vote encompasses more than voting. It also encompasses the options of voting independent and of withholding our votes.

In the case of the presidential campaign, our having an African candidate run for the presidency as an independent(necessarily, because he or she is certainly not going to receive the nomination from the Democrat or Republican convention) serves a number of practical and significant functions: 1-It provides us an opportunity to get used to the idea of acting together and on our own collective behalf. 2-It lets the Democrats know that they will no longer be able to automatically depend upon us to provide that important swing vote that is crucial in close elections. 3-This separation between ourselves and the Democratic Party would give stimulus to a radical rethinking on our part of the kind of political, economic, and cultural assumptions that have kept us in a slave-to-master relationship with America's Caucasian Establishment. And even from the perspective of those of us who do not recognize the need for a radical departure from the status quo, an African candidacy viewed by Caucasians as being a serious effort on our part would place our candidate in a position, at the Democratic Party convention, to secure what many would consider to be valuable concessions.

The business of an African running for the presidency, if it is worth our effort to involve ourselves in this electoral brand of politics, is not a matter of symbolism but a matter of realism. It is reality that neither the

Democrats nor Republicans stand for the kinds of fundamental political and economic changes required for us to achieve our aspirations and receive justice. It is reality that our loyalty to the Democrats has not been reciprocated. It is a reality that, when you have a problem and the person(s) ultimately to blame for that problem won't solve it for you or even do much to help you solve it, you have to take matters into your own hands.

As to the question of whether Jesse Jackson is that person who should be our candidate, one would have to have mixed feelings. On the one hand, Jesse does share some important concerns with us; he articulates those concerns eloquently; and he is the kind of orator who can attract people and elicit their loyalty. But on the other hand, it is becoming increasingly clear that his politics is not the politics of fundamental change but the politics of liberal accommodation. For example, we recall the strength of character he exhibited while walking into the '84 convention, with his talk of certain non-negotiable demands; and the utter wretchedness of character he walked out with, having had not one of his "non-negotiable" demands met but supporting the Democrats' nominee anyway. We recall his folding under pressure with respect to the numerous Louis Farrakhan controversies.

What kind of person do we need as a presidential candidate? Certainly we want an articulate person, which Jesse Jackson certainly is. But if our running one of our own in the presidential race is to have meaning, that Brother or Sister should not be an apologist for the "American Way," should not be a Caucasian liberal in black face, should not be one who "mellows out" in order to become more acceptable to the Caucasian press.

One common criticism about Jesse Jackson is that he is an opportunist, that he is in politics for his own glory. That may or may not be the case. It is possible that the true testing of the validity of that criticism is yet to come. Nevertheless, there are enough questions about Jesse that it would seem that the ball for answering those questions is in his court. What will he do at the Democratic convention? What will he do after the conven-

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Back In Time

"... the mbira("African thumb piano") first came from a place white men have never seen, called 'Zimba Risina Musuwo'("Houses without doors"), located north of Rusape in the direction of Mt. Darwin. At first the mbira sounded from inside a large rock near a circular stone house with no door. People gathered whenever they heard the mbira's music emanating from the rock. A disembodied voice told the people the name of each song as it was played. The people believed that the voice was that of Chaminuka, the principal Shona spirit and great rainmaker. Later, Chaminuka took possession of a man named Nyadate, through whom he told the people to make mbira. Nyadate showed the people how to make mbira, which they learned to play by listening to the rock. Nyadate informed the people that mbira music was the favorite music of the spirits. He later disappeared into the sea, never to be seen again."

-A legend from Zimbabwe on the origin of the mbira, appearing on page 45 of THE SOUL OF MBIRA by Paul F. Berliner.

"...while he(a small boy of about ten years of age) was going to his father's farm early in the morning, he heard a little bird whistling in the woods, and, greatly impressed by the melodious voice of the bird...he stopped and listened to a song...He went on his way, cut some sticks and shaped them flat. He cut another two sticks, and, after arranging the former on his lap, he began to strike them with the latter...This lad succeeded in playing the song which he picked up from the mouth of the bird. This song is known and played by every 'balanji' player."

-A legend from Sierra Leone on the origin of the balanji(xylophone) and its music, appearing on page 93 of ROOTS OF BLACK MUSIC by Ashenafi Kebede.

FLAME Editorial Policy

The HARAMBEE FLAME, the monthly publication of the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization(parent chapter of the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization, Inc.), is a pan-Africanist newsletter. This means that the FLAME's priority, with respect to news and views, is African people, events, and developments which affect us and are, or should be, of concern to us. The FLAME does not recognize any artificial distinction between African people based solely on place of birth. Therefore, references to African people are made on the basis of our common ancestry. An exception to this policy is the reprinting of articles, or excerpts thereof, from other publications, in which cases we do not alter the terms used therein to fit our editorial policy.

Articles contained in the FLAME do not necessarily represent the official postions of the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization unless they are accompanied by a statement identifying the views as being those of the organization. Generally speaking, all unsigned articles are by the editor, Wopashitwe Mondo Byen we Langa(aka David Rice).

We encourage you to submit articles to the FLAME. Please enclose with your submission a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Articles should not exceed 900 words. Short stories are subject to the same restriction with respect to length. We also welcome poetry and graphics. Send your submissions to: HARAMBEE FLAME
Attn: Editor/Mondo
P.O. Box 2500
Lincoln, NE 68502-0500

Note on poetry submissions: We are looking for poems that make effective use of imagery, that have beauty and power, that do not sacrifice any of the above for the sake of rhyme and/or uniform rhythm patterns.

From Other Sources

Maximum Cultural Development v. Survival Cultural Existence

(In an article entitled "Were Corners Made For Black Men To Stand On?" Haki Madhubuti contrasts the mentalities of two different kinds of American-born African men, describing one as being characteristic of maximum cultural development and describing the other as being characteristic of a survival cultural existence. Madhubuti's observations are throught-provoking and insightful.)

Maximum cultural development: 1-Study oriented: reads, evaluates and debates books, newspapers, magazines and scholarly journals. 2-Worker: looks for ways in which to actively work for self; may hold a job outside in order to sustain self and family. 3-Organized and systematic. 4-Progressively collective; conscious of others. 5-Family-oriented, regards mate as partner in struggle; loves children. 6-Land consciousness, realizes that the only thing that nobody is making any more of is land. 7-Disciplined; strong and unyielding. 8-Serious. 9-Analytical and critical. 10-Frugal; buys mainly on need basis. 11-Social life is developmental and involves children. 12-Creatively aggressive; will dare the impossible if it is possible. 13-Respects elders. 14-Dislikes incompetence and mediocrity. 15-Fights against black-on-black crime and understands that its root is white-on-black crime. 16-Loves black art, music and literature. 17-Can give and follow instructions. 18-Committed to black liberation. 19-No drug use. 20-Politically active, not crisis oriented, acts on information rather than reacts. 21-Self-confident. Respects others regardless of race or culture. 22-Understands the economic forces that control our lives on a local, national and international level.

Survival cultural existence: 1-Does not read or study after "formal" education. Buys few books, reads mainly newspapers, sports pages or popular novels and magazines. 2-Works eight hours for someone else. Welfare conscious, get-it-for-nothing attitude. 3-Unsystematic and definitely not organized unless it is for someone else. 4-

Backwardly individualistic; I, me, mine mentality. 5-Not family-oriented. Regards mate as property. Rates children low. Generally, single-minded; does not want children or responsibility of home life. 6-Not land conscious. 7-Actively fights against discipline. 8-Non-serious majority of the time. 9-Not critical or analytical. Prefers not to think for self. 10-Consumer junkie; if it's advertised, they've got it. Cannot distinguish wants from needs. 11-Loves social and night life, i.e., lives for the weekend, loves sexual conquests. 12-A defeatist; few goals other than acquisition of material artifacts. 13-Puts elders in nursing homes and forgets them. 14-Gravitates towards incompetence and mediocrity. 15-Involved in black-on-black crime or apathetic to the issue. 16-Loves music of the new generation, any kind. 17-Can give instructions but not follow them. 18-Committed to self-liberation only. 19-Drug dependency--cigarettes, alcohol, hard drugs, etc. 20-Politically inactive. Crisis oriented. Reacts. 21-Egotistical, ignorantly arrogant, has little concept of culture; feels he will be forever the racial underclass. 22-Naive of economics, unaware of the international nature of capitalism that touches all of our lives.

-Above passages excerpted from pages 28 and 29 of the May/June edition of THE BLACK SCHOLAR.

Mother In Detroit Organizes Against Violence

"Barfield(Clementine Barfield, whose 16-year-old son was shot to death and another son critically injured last year) decided to take action...she formed an organization called Save Our Sons And Daughters(SOSAD), composed primarily of other parents whose children were felled in the street violence...Although gun and drug pushers are priority targets of Barfield's group, she identified community apathy as the major enemy.

"'Black folks have become too complacent and too concerned with chasing middle-class status', she said, 'and we've lost virtually an entire generation of young people bec-

ause of those distorted values. For years we've watched things deteriorate in our communities...'

"'We've watched it all', she added, 'and by we, I specifically mean black adults who should know better...Our young people are growing up with a gaping emptiness inside and they're using drugs, sex and violence to fill it'...

"Adam Shakoor, a city native who now sits as chief judge of the 36th District Court,...said a change in the style of black leadership also hastened a decline in the black community's ethical standards. 'Throughout most of our history, our leaders were idealists who projected a folk vision informed by definite moral values. But in the '70s, Shakoor noted, 'black leadership became dominated by politicians. Although political activity is an important exercise of citizenship, the essence of politics is compromise, pragmatism and re-election, not idealism, morality and ethics. Black youth sense this moral void and are adopting the materialistic values of those influencing them'.

"At a rally against teen violence held this summer, SOSAD expected to attract no more than 1,500 people, but a crowd of several thousand materialized...Barfield revealed a series of proposals that her group wanted the city to consider. Chief among SOSAD's recommendations to the city were: Institute a school program to teach non-violent methods of dispute resolution. Develop drug rehabilitation centers in every city precinct. Develop a city-wide program to involve youth in neighborhood rehabilitation projects. Develop more effective strategies to fight truancy. Institute more stringent enforcement of the city's handgun ordinance..."

-Above passages excerpted from "No Cease-fire For Detroit's 'War In The Streets'" which appears on pages 7 and 10 of the September 23-29 edition of IN THESE TIMES.

Columbus Church Directory Graphically Illustrates Problem

IN the September 17 edition of the Columbus CALL AND POST the "Columbus Church Directory" lists 40 "black churches," their schedules for services, addresses, etc. In addition, each block of information also contains a photo of the church's pastor, all of whom are apparently African. The above picture appears prominently, twice, among the photos of these various pastors. While the picture is not identified, one would have to suppose it is intended to protray Jesus Christ. Since we know that most of our preachers exhort their congregations to worship a Jesus whom is portrayed as a Caucasian and we also know something of the psychological impact of this upon Africans born and living in America's white-supremist society, no further remarks are required.

-Picture taken from page 13 A of the September 17 edition of the Columbus CALL AND POST.

Farrakhan May Or May Not Speak

"...That date, August 8(on which Louis Farrakhan was to have spoken at the Los Angeles Convention Center), was cancelled by Farrakhan following an unsuccessful attempt by Los Angeles Mayor Tom Bradley to prevent him from speaking in the city.

"Meanwhile, in New York City, the Nation of Islam has

filed a show-cause order against the Jacob K. Javits Convention Center. The Nation is arguing that the Center had reneged on an oral agreement to rentspace to the Nation for an October 25 'Savior's Day' rally...

"...Said Harlem State Senator David Paterson, 'This is a precedent for the Convention Center...As a citizen of this country I think he should be allowed to speak. I'll go along with Voltaire and defend the right to give a political opinion'.

"Other Black officials were not so eager to come to the defense of the embattled Muslim leader. Spokespersons for Manhattan Borough President David Dinkins, who as city clerk joined with Mayor Ed Koch and other Democratic Party officials in denouncing Farrakhan's appearance at the Garden in 1985, refused to comment on the case when contacted by the ALLIANCE." (Emphases added.)

*Above passages excerpted from "Farrakhan Will Speak at L.A. Convention Center; Sues In New York," which appears on page 11 of the September 4 edition of THE NATIONAL ALLIANCE.

Autonomy Granted to Africans on Nicaragua's Atlantic Coast

"Nicaragua has become the first country in this hemisphere to adopt a sweeping law guaranteeing the political, economic, language, cultural, and religious rights of Indians and Blacks.

"The law establishes autonomous governments on Nicaragua's Atlantic Coast, where most Nicaraguan Indians and Blacks live. It was adopted overwhelmingly by the National Assembly September 2...

...

"In Nicaragua's case, the majority of the country's more than 3 million people are Spanish-speaking mestizos, concentrated on the Pacific Coast. On the Atlantic Coast there are 182,000 mestizos. But there are also 75,000 Miskito Indians, with their own language; 26,000 Creole

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Blacks, who speak English; 9,000 Sumo Indians, with their own language; and 1,750 Garifonas and 850 Rama Indians, who both speak English...

"The following are some of the main provisions of the law: All residents of the Coast enjoy 'absolute equality of rights and duties', regardless of the size of their community or its level of development. They have the right to develop their own culture, religion, language, and forms of organization.

While Spanish remains the official language of Nicaragua, the languages spoken by Indians and Blacks are official languages on the Coast. Every child has the right to a bilingual education.

Land that has traditionally belonged to Indian communities remains in their hands and cannot be sold or taken away. The communities have the right to benefit 'in just proportion' from the wealth produced on their communally owned land.

Residents of the Atlantic Coast will elect their own regional governments--one in the north and one in the south--in which each of the six racial groups is to have representation. The governments will be responsible for seeing that political, social, and economic projects are carried out respecting the traditions and aspirations of Coast residents..."

-Above passages excerpted from "Nicaragua Adopts Historic Autonomy Plan," which appears on pages 1 and 13 of the September 18 edition of THE MILITANT.

...

African Radio Station Offers Alternative

"Africa No. 1, the 'pan-African alternative' to Western radio services with its French-language broadcasts, is set to expand listenership among English-speaking Africans...The radio station boasts an audience of more than 10 million from Senegal to Zaire...

...

"...Although the show is broadcast from Africa No. 1's powerful transmitter in Gabon, it is recorded in London, where not only African, but reggae, soca, and zouk music from the Caribbean is readily available."

-Above passages excerpted from "Bilingual Broadcasting," which appears on page 47 of the October edition of WORLD PRESS REVIEW.

Zimbabwean Sculptor Gains World Recognition

"A self-taught Zimbabwean stone sculptor, who one art critic says is more of a master in stone sculpture than Michelangelo, came to his metier by chance and is winning a reputation as one of the world's leading practitioners of his art...

"Today his(Henry Munyaradzi's) sculptures command prices as high as $35,000. He has exhibited in London, Paris, Los Angeles, and in many African countries. 'My art is very Zimbabwean', he says. 'My themes come from Shona culture and legend, and depict animals and plants that we have a special relationship to'..."

-Above passages excerpted from "African 'Michelangelo'" which appears on page 51 of the October edition of WORLD PRESS REVIEW.

Botha Regime Tries Pseudo Representation Ploy

"Pretoria is moving full steam ahead with an attempt to coopt black leaders into its grand scheme for ongoing white control of the country... the government confirmed on Sept. 11 a new plan to bring blacks into the parliamentary process through a National Statutory Council.

"The regime envisions the National Council as a forum in which government representatives and homeland and moderate black leaders discuss a new constitutional setup for South Africa...

"The black community and most black organizations have rejected the council idea ever since its introduction last May. Indications are that the proposed council will not attract the support of any creditable black leader...

"...The UDF(United Democratic Front) sees the National Council as no more than formalizing the alliance between the Botha government, apartheid's puppets in the black community and moderate black 'leaders' who have no support among the people..."

-Above passages excerpted from "Pretoria Tries To Coopt Blacks With Farcical Council," which appears on page 13 of the September 23 edition of THE GUARDIAN.

Anti-Defamation League Continues To Meddle In African Affairs

"A measure that would limit travel by representatives of the African National Congress(ANC) and the Namibian South West Africa People's Organization(SWAPO) to metropolitan New York has been passed by the House. Proponents of the legislation bolstered their case with smear pieces tying the ANC to the Palestinian Liberation Organization and the South African Communist Party. The documents were produced by the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith and the Jewish Telegraphic Agency..."

-Above passages excerpted from "Congress Moves To Restrict ANC And SWAPO," which appears on page 4 of the September 9 edition of THE GUARDIAN.

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tion? To what extent will he allow himself(and ourselves through him) to be disrespected? Will he turn his back on the Caucasian political Establishment and turn toward us? All this remains to be seen.

All the above said, when we speak of Jesse Jackson, we are necessarily speaking of ourselves as well. Is not his liberalism, his allegiance to capitalism, his belief in the maintenance of present international power relationships(though he is critical of the methods by which the nature of these relationships is enforced)--aren't these stances indicative of those which most of us take? If the Jackson candidacy is going to have significant and constructive effect, it is going to be required that we all grow in the process, that we move from liberalism to a shared political perspective in which we truly believe in the idea of self-determination. In the meantime, if Jesse Jackson is not all that our situation calls out for, then it is our responsibility to demand that he become more. If it is the case that Jesse is more aware of the actual nature of America than he would indicate and he is afraid to speak the truth as he knows it, then it is up to us to let him know that his support comes from us, not from the Caucasians(Jews included) whom he seems to be bending over backward to please.

Finally, the question must be asked: How does Jesse view his running for the presidency? If he sees his candidacy either as a real effort to get into the White House or as a paving of the way for himself or another African to become President sometime down the line, then many of the issues raised here would have no meaning. If, however, he sees his candidacy as part of a process by which independent African power in this country is developed, then these issues will have meaning to him, and we will see a different Jesse after the '88 convention from the one we saw following the convention in '84.

-Wopashitwe Mondo Eyen we Langa/Editor

Announcements

Sweet Honey And The Rock, a Washington based group of six African-American women who sing gospel, jazz, African chants, and political songs will perform Saturday evening, October 10 at Kimball Recital Hall. Tickets for this performance will go on sale September 8 at the Kimball Hall Box Office. For additional information, contact Donna Polk at the Indian Center in Lincoln at 474-5231.

Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization Meetings are held from six-eight p.m. at the Nebraska State Pen in Lincoln. The following is a schedule of our meetings for the months of October and November: Tuesday, October 6; Sunday, October 11; Tuesday, October 20; Sunday, October 25; Tuesday, November 3; Sunday, November 8; Tuesday, November 17; Sunday, November 22; Tuesday, December 1. If you wish to attend a meeting, write to us at P.O. Box 2500; Lincoln, NE; 68502-0500 at least a week prior to the date of the meeting you wish to attend. Or you may call 471-3161(ext. 380 or 379) between the hours of 12:30 and 3:00 Monday through Friday. In addition, if you are knowledgeable about African history and/or culture, current events and/or developments about and/or of concern to African people, and wish to conduct an educational program or give a cultural presentation or performance, you are encouraged to share with us.

In the May/June edition of THE BLACK SCHOLAR, there is an excellent series of articles on "The Crisis Of The Black Male." To inquire about obtaining a copy, write to: THE BLACK SCHOLAR; P.O. Box 2869; Oakland, CA; 94609.

Actress Alfre Woodard, who plays the role of Winnie Mandela in the film "Mandela," is featured in the October edition of MOTHER JONES Magazine. To inquire about obtaining a copy, write to: MOTHER JONES; 1663 Mission St.; Second Floor; San Francisco, CA; 94103.